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SUBJECT: SENIOR NIGERIAN CORRUPTION TRIAL POSTPONED AGAIN

REF: ABUJA 1074

1. The high-profile corruption case brought against five senior ex-GON officials, including the Labor Minister sacked over the scandal, by the Independent Corrupt Practices Commission (ICPC) was postponed to December 9, 2004. After numerous delays and postponements, the trial had been scheduled for October 27, but court clerks explained that the trial judge had been unable to book a flight to Abuja from Port Harcourt.

2. Meanwhile, Sagem, the French firm accused of bribing the five officials to win the national ID card contract, has continued to fulfill its contractual obligations, despite the scandal. Sagem, however, has threatened to pull out of Nigeria by the end of 2004 if the GON does not pay its outstanding Naira 9 billion (US\$68 million) balance promptly.

CAMPBELL